

\$150,000 for official reception and representation expenses; and not to exceed \$258,000 for unforeseen emergencies of a confidential nature, to be allocated and expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury and to be accounted for solely on his certificate: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated under this heading, \$5,114,000, to remain available until September 30, 2009, is for the Treasury-wide Financial Statement Audit and Internal Control Program, of which such amounts as may be necessary may be transferred to accounts of the Department's offices and bureaus to conduct audits: *Provided further*, That this transfer authority shall be in addition to any other provided in this Act: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated under this heading, \$3,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2009, is for secure space requirements: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated under this heading, \$2,300,000, to remain available until September 30, 2009, is for salary and benefits for hiring of personnel whose work will require completion of a security clearance investigation in order to perform highly classified work to further the activities of the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated under this heading, \$2,100,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010, is to develop and implement programs within the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Compliance Policy, including entering into cooperative agreements.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the distinguished minority whip to engage in a colloquy.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I would like to inquire of my friends, the chairman and the ranking member, whether they are willing to work with me going forward on a solution for two broadcasters that cover the Joplin, Missouri, Pittsburgh, Kansas, broadcast area. This includes a significant portion of my district.

Due to the forthcoming digital transition, which Congress has already authorized for early 2009, the channel allocation assigned to KFJX, a local FOX affiliate, is likely to be shared with emergency first responders. This could result in significant service disruptions for both the station and the first responders. Another local station, CBS affiliate KOAM, has offered to make available spare spectrum for KFJX's use after the transition, which should provide a solution to the problem.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that one of these stations, KFJX commenced operations after the FCC issued viable digital channels for all existing broadcasters, at this point the FCC believes it is unable to make the proposed change without congressional intervention. I would like to work with my friends in order to fix this problem as this bill works its way through the process.

Mr. REGULA. I thank the gentleman for his concern regarding this important issue. The digital transition will have many consequences, some unintended, such as the situation the gentleman described in Missouri.

I look forward to working with the minority whip, the chairman, and the

FCC to bring resolution to this issue over the next few months and prior to the enactment of this bill.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the chairman of the subcommittee.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Missouri for raising some important concerns about the effect of the digital transition on broadcasters in his home State. I will be glad to work with the gentleman and the ranking member to try to come to a satisfactory resolution of the matter.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read. The Clerk read as follows:

DEPARTMENT-WIDE SYSTEMS AND CAPITAL INVESTMENTS PROGRAMS
(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For development and acquisition of automatic data processing equipment, software, and services for the Department of the Treasury, \$18,710,000, to remain available until September 30, 2010: *Provided*, That these funds shall be transferred to accounts and in amounts as necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Department's offices, bureaus, and other organizations: *Provided further*, That this transfer authority shall be in addition to any other transfer authority provided in this Act: *Provided further*, That none of the funds appropriated under this heading shall be used to support or supplement "Internal Revenue Service, Operations Support" or "Internal Revenue Service, Business Systems Modernization".

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Chairman SERRANO for yielding to me. I appreciate the opportunity to work with the gentleman from New York on this issue.

As the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce Postal Service and District of Columbia, I look forward to working closely with my colleagues on issues within our subcommittee's jurisdiction.

In 1971, Congress made the Postal Service self-sustaining. However, Congress continued to subsidize the mailing cost of the blind, nonprofit organizations, local newspapers, and publishers of educational material. It did so by providing an appropriation to the Postal Service to cover the revenues it had given up or "foregone" by charging below cost rates to these groups. Appropriations for these subsidies increased as postage rates and the number of nonprofits grew, approaching \$1 billion annually in the mid-1980s.

In the early 1990s, Congress did not appropriate enough to cover these costs and refused to let the Postal Service invoke its statutory right to raise rates to cover the shortfall. The Postal Service pleaded that providing social subsidies was not part of its mission, hindered its competitiveness, and was more regressive than taxation with its impact.

The Revenue Foregone Reform Act of 1993 eliminated appropriations to support reduced rates for nonprofits, which effectively transferred the costs

to other mailers. The Act retained free postage only for the blind and for overseas absentee ballot materials. Appropriations for subsidizing that narrow purpose have been in the range of \$60 million to \$100 million each year.

The 1993 Act also provided for an annual payment of \$29 million each year for 42 years to pay off the debt accumulated in the early 1990s. Congress has appropriated this amount every year from 1994 through 2006, even though the President's fiscal year 2005 and fiscal year 2006 budgets proposed to eliminate the payment. Failure to fund this authorized appropriation places the remaining debt of more than \$800 million at risk of nonpayment which would significantly increase postal costs. In addition, not providing funds for these services over time will require the Postal Service to record these obligations as a bad debt and will unfairly transfer these costs to postage ratepayers whose costs have already increased due to the recent rate determinations by the Postal Rate Commission.

It is important to note that Congress entered into this arrangement and has covered the \$29 million each year without fail since the 1993 Revenue Foregone Act was enacted. By reneging on our obligation, we place the fiscal well-being of the Postal Service at risk. We also send a signal that Congress will not stand behind free mail for the blind and overseas absentee balloting materials, something we should not be doing.

For the record, I note that in addition to our subcommittee letter to the Appropriations Committee requesting that the \$29 million in revenue foregone reimbursement be restored, a number of postal stakeholders echoed the request: Postal labor unions and management, the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers, and the postmaster general all want the revenue foregone payment honored.

I ask the chairman: Will the chairman support restoring this important funding when the bill goes to conference with the Senate?

Mr. SERRANO. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman has made important observations regarding the necessity of keeping Congress' commitment to repay this long-term debt to the Postal Service. I agree with my colleague that failure to meet this commitment would adversely affect the future financial stability of the Postal Service and eventually force it to take actions that would increase cost for postal consumers. I want to assure the gentleman that I will work hard to reach an agreement with the Senate that produces a conference report that provides the \$29 million payment.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to take this opportunity to call on the administration to resume including these funds in its budget requests. The revenue foregone appropriation has not been part of the President's budget request since fiscal year 2004.